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**MASTERS OF MILITARY STUDIES**

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**Integrating the Interagency in the Armed Forces of the Philippines Approach to  
Counterinsurgency**

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTERS OF MILITARY STUDIES**

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL CHARLTON SEAN M GAERLAN PHILIPPINE NAVY  
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## *Executive Summary*

**Title:** Integrating the Interagency in the Armed Forces of the Philippines Approach to Counterinsurgency

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**Thesis:** The Armed Forces of the Philippines cannot conduct successful counterinsurgency on its own and thus, it should integrate the interagency process in its approach to counterinsurgency to be successful.

**Discussion:** The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is currently engaged in Internal Security Operations (ISO) to address various threats to national security. In order to address these threats, the Department of National Defense through the AFP designed ISO Plan *Bantay Laya* in 2001 and *Bantay Laya II* in 2006. The Philippine Marine Corp (PMC) deploys units to the different Area Commands to implement *Bantay Laya II*. Marines have been generally successful in conducting combat operations and clearing villages from insurgents. Marines also conduct Civil Military Operations in order to gain the support of the populace. Despite these efforts, insurgencies continue to plague Marine Areas of Operations because they do not address the root causes of insurgency. *Bantay Laya II* is the campaign plan of the AFP in support of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines' National Internal Security Plan (NISP) of 2001. The NISP is a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach that allows the government to use all instruments of national power to address insurgencies. Marine units coordinate with government agencies, local government units, non-government organizations but with varying degrees of consistency. Most of the time, the AFP is left on its own in conducting counterinsurgency without the support of national government agencies. Not all commanders appreciate the wide range of activities that other agencies provide because they do not understand the interagency. The vast array of resources and skills that other agencies provide at best do not converge into a focused effort for counterinsurgency (COIN) and at worst remain untapped. The AFP has designed different strategies including "winning the hearts and minds of the people" to defeat insurgencies but have failed to do so. From these failed strategies, it is clear that the usual military response is inadequate to address insurgencies. The Philippine Defense Review (PDR) in 2003 provides the framework for introducing institutional, structural and systemic reforms for the military establishment. These reforms are valuable to the conduct of COIN, for if pursued correctly, they would bridge the training and doctrinal gap of the AFP. It would also institutionalize interagency integration in the conduct of a holistic approach to COIN. The AFP should take advantage of the opportunities that the PDR provide especially so that the special attention is on CMO, training and doctrine development. The AFP needs to come up with a COIN Doctrine that would guide commanders, officers and soldiers in the performance of COIN.

**Conclusion:** It is time for the PMC to lead in instituting a paradigm shift, which would not only be beneficial to the Corps but also more importantly be in the best interest of the Filipino people. The PMC should act immediately and pursue the implementation of the NISP by integrating the interagency in Philippine COIN.

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THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

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### **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
CMO	Civil Military Operations
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CPP/NPA	Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army
DND	Department of National Defense
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
<i>Huks</i>	<i>HUKBALAHAP (Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon</i> or Nationalist Army against the Japanese)
ISO	Internal Security Operations
Ji	Jemaah Islamiya
LGUs	Local Government Units
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NISP	National Internal Security Plan
OEF-P	Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines
OPLAN	Operations Plan
PA	Philippine Army
PMC	Philippine Marine Corps
RMNLF	Rogue MNLF
TTPs	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## *Preface*

The resurgence of the Abu Sayyaf Group in Basilan, the failure of the peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the breakaway of the RMNLF from the peace accord, and the resiliency of the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army insurgency indicate that current counterinsurgency efforts are inadequate to address insurgencies. The application of classical counterinsurgency places primary concern on direct action against insurgencies and do not address the root causes of insurgency. The contemporary approach to counterinsurgency necessitates that all instruments of national power integrate into a unified effort to address insurgencies.

The National Internal Security Plan provides the framework for a holistic approach to insurgencies but the different government agencies do not integrate their efforts to do so. The Philippine Defense Review provides the framework for instituting organizational and systemic changes to improve the defense and military establishment. This paper recommends how the Armed Forces of the Philippines can take advantage of these frameworks in designing a doctrine that would ensure the effective conduct of counterinsurgency.

I am deeply indebted to my mentor Dr. Eric Y. Shibuya who patiently guided me in completing this study. The subjects offered by the Command and Staff College provided me with a better understanding of insurgency and counterinsurgency, which facilitated me in developing my thoughts in writing this paper. I am also grateful to the Marine Corps Library and the Office of the Assistant Chief of Marine Corps Staff for Operations for the references I used.

I would also like to thank my family for all the inspiration and support they have given me despite being far away home and to the almighty God for all the blessings he has given me while completing this study.

# **Integrating the Interagency in the Armed Forces of the Philippines Approach to Counterinsurgency**

## **Introduction**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is currently engaged in Internal Security Operations (ISO) to address various threats to national security. The major threats addressed by the AFP are the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army (CPP/NPA), the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) that has links to the Jemaah Islamiya (JI) and Al Qaeda. In order to address these threats, the Department of National Defense (DND) through the AFP designed ISO Plan *Bantay Laya*<sup>1</sup> in 2001 and *Bantay Laya II* in 2006. The strategic goal of *Bantay Laya II* is "to defeat all groups posing a threat to national security, enhance the security situation and peace and order condition in the country in order to establish a physically and psychologically secured environment conducive to national development."<sup>2</sup> The medium-term objectives set by the AFP under *Bantay Laya II* are: to defeat the CPP/NPA by year 2010; destroy the ASG and JI; and contain the Southern Philippines Secessionist Groups.<sup>3</sup>

The Philippine Marine Corp (PMC) deploys units to the different Area Commands to implement *Bantay Laya II*. Marines have been generally successful in conducting combat operations and clearing villages from insurgents. Marines also conduct Civil Military Operations (CMO) in order to gain the support of the populace. Humanitarian assistance, construction of community projects, and disaster relief operations are some of the activities that gain the support of the people. Despite these efforts, insurgencies continue to plague Marine Areas of Operations because they do not address the root causes of insurgency such as poor governance, injustice and poverty.



*Bantay Laya II* is the campaign plan of the AFP in support of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines' (GRP) National Internal Security Plan (NISP)<sup>4</sup> of 2001. The NISP is a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach that allows the government to use all instruments of national power to address insurgencies. Marine units coordinate with government agencies, local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations (NGOs) but with varying degrees of consistency. Most of the time, the AFP is left on its own in conducting counterinsurgency (COIN) without the support of national government agencies. Not all commanders appreciate the wide range of activities that other agencies provide because they do not understand the interagency. The vast array of resources and skills that other agencies provide at best do not converge into a focused effort for COIN and at worst remain untapped. The AFP cannot achieve the objectives of *Bantay Laya II* on its own and must take advantage of the NISP apparatus to improve its conduct of COIN. In order for AFP units to conduct COIN effectively, the AFP should integrate the interagency process in its approach to COIN.

### **The Philippine Marine Corps in COIN**

After World War II, the United States granted the Philippines its independence. Taking advantage of the existing conditions during that time, an anti-Japanese guerilla force called the *HUKBALAHAP*<sup>5</sup> (*Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon* or Nationalist Army against the Japanese) undertook a communist insurgency against the Philippine government. The group called the *Huks* changed its name to the *Hukbong Magpapalaya sa Bayan* (Army that will free the Country). The *Huks* adopted the propaganda line "land for the landless" and "prosperity for the masses"<sup>6</sup> in order to gain popular support from the people. The *Huks* almost succeeded if not for the excellent leadership of then-Secretary of National Defense Ramon Magsaysay. Given free rein by President Elpidio Quirino to run the COIN campaign, Magsaysay instituted necessary

reforms to defeat the insurgency.<sup>7</sup> With the assistance of U.S. funds and advisers, (particularly Colonel Edward Geary Lansdale of the Joint United States Military Advisory Group), Magsaysay undertook a coordinated military and civilian campaign.<sup>8</sup> Magsaysay restored legitimacy to the government by eradicating corruption, conducting an honest and peaceful election, and transforming the AFP into a professional army. Magsaysay ran for the presidency in 1953 and won convincingly. He then addressed the grievances of the poor by providing essential services, education, and land, thereby eradicating the root causes of the insurgency. On the military aspect of the campaign, the AFP adjusted its tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) in dealing with the insurgents maximizing the use of Psychological Operations, and Intelligence in order to defeat the insurgents.<sup>9</sup> On 17 May 1954, Luis Taruc, the leader of the *Huks* surrendered to Magsaysay. The AFP conducted follow up operations to finish off the *Huks* resulting to the end of the rebellion in 1955.

One of the organizational changes instituted by Magsaysay was the creation of the Philippines Marines.<sup>10</sup> From its initial success against the *Huks*, the PMC has fought in numerous successful campaigns against various threats groups to national security. During the 1970s, the PMC carved its niche as a fighting force when it campaigned against the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Mindanao during the height of the secessionist movement. During the 1980s, Marines conducted campaigns successfully against the CPP/NPA in Davao, Surigao and Bulacan (see Threat Map in appendix A). In the 1990s, Marines took the new challenge in fighting kidnap for ransom and terrorist groups like the ASG. In 2000, the Marines spearheaded the war against the MILF, capturing all MILF camps and dealing the MILF a serious defeat.<sup>11</sup> In 2006, Marines conducted OPLAN (Operations Plan) ULTIMATUM, which led to the neutralization of the top leadership of the ASG among them ASG “leader” Kadaffy Janjalani and

the second-in-command Abu Sulaiman. The MNLF signed a peace agreement with the Philippine government in 1996.<sup>12</sup> The peace agreement is still in effect despite the resumption of armed hostilities by a small group of disgruntled MNLF members in 2007.<sup>13</sup> This group, the Rogue MNLF (RMNLF), continue to be a security threat in Mindanao.

The PMC currently deploy Marine combat units in the provinces of Sulu (against the ASG and RMNLF), Basilan (against the MILF and ASG), Tawi-Tawi (ASG) and Palawan (CPP/NPA). The newly activated PMC Civil Military Operations Group (CMOG) deploys its companies to support the CMO activities of the six operating Naval Forces throughout the archipelago. Marines help communities by undertaking low cost-high impact Engineering Civic Action Projects such as construction of water wells and repair of school buildings. Marines undertake Medical Civic Action Projects and Dental Civic Action Projects in coordination with government agencies, LGUs and NGOs. Most of the time funds for these projects come from AFP sources. Involvement of the U.S. in Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) has also provided funds for CMO projects especially in Sulu and Basilan.<sup>14</sup> Some of the best practices of PMC in COIN are the following:

1. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Brigade used the “Triad Strategy” in its campaign against the ASG in Sulu.<sup>15</sup> The concept was to use information operations, interagency coordination, and integration in direct response to the ASG’s civilian support, organizational structure, and its armed group. With the support of the LGUs and U.S., the Marines gained the support of the populace in the province of Sulu during the conduct of OPLAN ULTIMATUM that led to the neutralization of the ASG top leadership in 2006. Humanitarian aid activities and civic action programs were the centerpiece of the concept.<sup>16</sup>

2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade designed the "People's Day" concept in bringing the local government closer to the people in the province of Lanao del Norte. Whenever the Marines conducted civic action programs to the communities, it invited the local government officials to come along. This provided the opportunity for the people to talk to their leaders and air their problems. In this way, the people felt closer to the government. The brigade entered in a Memorandum of Agreement with the Provincial Police to support each other's operations. These initiatives led to the containment of the MILF in the province. The MILF did not commit any violent activities and no critical tower of the National Power Corporation was bombed during the deployment of the brigade in Lanao until its transfer to Sulu.<sup>17</sup>

3. Marine Battalion Landing Team 4 in coordination with the provincial government of Sulu and the OEF-P established local cooperatives in their Area of Responsibility in the province. These cooperatives provide the people income for the people and thereby improve their living conditions.<sup>18</sup>

4. Marine Battalion Landing Team 3 in coordination with the Sulu District Office of the Department of Education and the U.S., pursue the need for educating the children in their AOR. The unit regularly distributed books and school materials to schoolchildren. With accreditation from the Department of Education, Marines serve as teachers to cultural minorities.<sup>19</sup>

For the past fifty years, the PMC has done well in its assigned tasks. Marines have cleared villages of enemy presence, neutralized insurgent leaders, killed or captured insurgents, recovered firearms and other war material. However, the insurgencies remain a threat to national

security. While the Marines have kept the insurgents at bay, the insurgencies continue to thrive.

As Hernandez points out:

Considering the Clear-Hold-Support methodology of Operation Plan Bantay Laya, it is logical that the Marine Corps put premium to combat operations to “Clear” areas controlled, influenced and threatened by the various security threat groups. During the early stages of the insurgency, counterinsurgents strive for the destruction of the armed component of the internal threats. Despite the conduct of ISO for the past three decades, the Marine Corps still strives for the destruction of internal threats.<sup>20</sup>

The AFP has designed different strategies including “winning the hearts and minds of the people”<sup>21</sup> to defeat insurgencies but have failed to do so. From these failed strategies, it is clear that the usual military response is inadequate to address insurgencies. The AFP must shift its approach from Classical to Contemporary COIN and integrate other agencies so that all instruments of national power converge to defeat insurgencies. For a better understanding of the two approaches, it is necessary to distinguish between Classical and Contemporary COIN.

### **Classical Theory of COIN**

History has been replete with cases that provide numerous insights. The U.S. failed in its COIN campaign in Vietnam, the British conducted a successful COIN campaign in Malaya, and the Philippines continue to fight the CPP/NPA since 1969. According to David Kilcullen, “the term *classical counterinsurgency* describes the theory of counter-revolutionary warfare developed in response to the so-called wars of national liberation from 1944 to about 1982.”<sup>22</sup> The most prominent among the classical theorists is David Galula, who writes on how to defeat the insurgents by winning over the people. The central themes of his writings are on the laws and principles that counterinsurgents can apply to a campaign and fitting them to the nature and character of the insurgency. Galula recognizes the fact that insurgencies exist because of a cause

and that properly addressing the cause would defeat the insurgency. However, he argues that governments cannot address some causes of insurgencies.<sup>23</sup>

Galula proposes four courses of actions that counterinsurgents can take to defeat an insurgency in a “cold revolutionary war”<sup>24</sup>: direct action against the insurgents, indirect action against the insurgents, infiltration of the insurgent movement, and strengthening the political machine.<sup>25</sup> He explains that the counterinsurgents can take the above courses of action concurrently. As for a “hot revolutionary war,”<sup>26</sup> Galula writes that there are four laws of COIN:

1. The support of the population is as necessary for the counterinsurgent as for the insurgent.
2. Gain support through an active minority.
3. Support from the population is conditional.
4. Intensity of effort and vastness of means are essential.<sup>27</sup>

Analysis of Galula’s work reveals that his concepts are as relevant today as they were in the past. However, he is mistaken in his contention that if the government cannot address the cause, COIN could still be successful by directing its efforts against the insurgents. This emphasizes military actions against the enemy. Here lies the mistake that governments make when assessing their COIN campaigns. Physical defeat of the enemy is important but the most important aspect of COIN is to address the causes of the insurgency. The failures of COIN campaigns in Iraq, Afghanistan led to a rethinking of COIN.<sup>28</sup> The approach to COIN has changed from the classical theory of COIN which “tends to assume a binary struggle between insurgent and counterinsurgent”<sup>29</sup> to the contemporary theory of COIN as an interactively complex system.

## **Contemporary COIN Strategies**

The human nature of insurgency coupled with advances in technology and adaption of insurgents to government efforts makes contemporary COIN interactively complex. Insurgents use media and the internet in spreading their propaganda. If counterinsurgents do not adapt to insurgent activities and continue to prosecute their plans, frustration starts to build up. Collectively, insurgent activities will cause the counterinsurgents to revert to direct action. This is precisely what insurgents want the counterinsurgents to do. In order to be effective, indirect COIN actions must complement direct action. This is why contemporary theorists like Kilcullen, Bard O'Neill and Gordon McCormick emphasize a comprehensive approach in addressing all aspects of the insurgency. The latest COIN manual of the U.S. military (FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5) reflects the recognition of the importance of a holistic approach to COIN.

## **Counterinsurgency Manual**

In 2006, the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps published their latest Counterinsurgency Manual to fill the doctrinal gap of conducting COIN in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>30</sup> The manual provides a general approach to COIN with the recognition that "every insurgency is contextual and presents its own set of challenges."<sup>31</sup> The manual emphasizes the importance of campaign design. Campaign design is different from the usual planning, which staffs usually do whenever deployed for certain missions. While planning emphasizes doctrine and practice, campaign design focuses on creating a framework that aids in understanding the problem and provides continuous assessment of operations, the operational environment, and their interaction.<sup>32</sup> Campaign design provides the general approach that guides the development of the courses of action during detailed planning.<sup>33</sup> It improves determining the right problem over traditional planning. The elements for a viable campaign design are critical discussion, holistic thinking,

model making, intuitive decision-making, continuous assessment thru feedback, structured learning thru adaptation, and design adjustment.<sup>34</sup> Figure 2 (see Appendix B) illustrates a campaign design.

A very important aspect of design is the understanding of systems theory. The theory recognizes that interaction between two or more different elements makes a system and that the more interaction between the elements causes complexity.<sup>35</sup> An Insurgency is an interactively complex problem and addressing one of its components does not solve the problem. As Lieutenant General Peter Walls, Commander of Combined Ops (Rhodesia), observed, “you cannot win a war like this [an insurgency] purely through military means. The military is merely there to maintain law and order and provide a conducive atmosphere for political development.”<sup>36</sup> Conducting direct action on the insurgents without providing services to the people and ensuring good governance by the government is doomed to fail. The understanding of systems theory facilitates critical and creative thinking, which results into innovative solutions to problems.<sup>37</sup>

Another important aspect of systems theory is the concept of unintended consequences. Acting on one of the components may cause unintended consequences that may complicate the problem. The conduct of operations without respect for human rights would only alienate the people and may cause hatred that may take years to mend. That is why it is important that all actions are carefully thought of to avoid unintended consequences. Actions on the different components must be complementary. This brings us to the integral element of contemporary COIN, which is unity of effort. In emphasizing unity of effort, the manual states:

Achieving unity of effort is the goal of command and support relationships. All organizations contributing to a COIN operation should strive, or be persuaded to strive, for maximum unity of effort. Informed, strong leadership forms the foundation for achieving it. Leadership in this area focuses on the central



problems affecting the local populace. A clear understanding of the desired end state should infuse all efforts, regardless of the agencies or individuals charged with their execution.

The interaction of the military, government agencies, non-government organizations, international organizations and coalition partners to attain one goal is the interagency process.

### **The Interagency Approach**

National security is not just a military concern but also a concern of the entire government. As such, the government must direct all the instruments of national power (Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic) against insurgencies that threaten national security. In order to address complex problems such as crisis, disasters and threats, governments have adopted the whole-of-government approach, which according to Christensen and Laegreid:

Denotes the aspiration to achieve horizontal and vertical coordination in order to eliminate situations in which different policies undermine each other, so as to make better use of scarce resources, to create synergies by bringing together different stakeholders in a particular policy area, and to offer citizens to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues.<sup>38</sup>

In the case of an insurgency, it is very important to identify the root causes that drive them and understand the environment in which they thrive. At the onset, interagency coordination and collaboration is essential.<sup>39</sup> Only by conducting an in-depth analysis of the situation, which the interagency provide, can there be a better understanding of the problem. In the process of conducting COIN, achieving interagency coordination and collaboration is through integration of the different agencies. Integration of efforts is necessary to ensure that all activities are complementary and do not jeopardize the strategy as a whole. Continuous monitoring, assessment, and feedback by the interagency ensure that all activities continue to be relevant. This also minimizes the impact of unintended consequences.

The Philippine NISP provides a framework for an interagency approach to COIN. There is recognition that a holistic approach would best address insurgencies and their root causes as illustrated in Figure 3(see Appendix C). The objectives of the NISP are as follows:

1. Enhance good governance by fighting corruption and promoting transparency and public accountability.
2. Accelerate programs to reduce poverty and promote respect for human rights and right to development.
3. Apply the left hand and right hand efforts to resolve insurgency with the help of improved intelligence efforts.<sup>40</sup>

The NISP recognizes that all instruments of national power (political-legal-diplomatic, socioeconomic-psychosocial, peace and order-security, and information) must integrate into a single effort.<sup>41</sup> One component of the NISP is the peace-process, which aims at ending insurgencies through the “Six Paths to Peace”:

1. Pursuit of social, economic and political reforms;
2. Consensus-building and empowerment for peace;
3. Peaceful, negotiated settlement with the different rebel groups;
4. Programs for reconciliation, reintegration, and rehabilitation;
5. Conflict management and protection of civilians caught in armed conflict; and,
6. Building and nurturing a climate conducive to peace.<sup>42</sup>

The NISP calls for the Clear-Hold-Consolidate-Develop operational methodology, which defines the functions of different government agencies in addressing insurgency (see Figure 4, Appendix D). However, there are problems in the application of the methodology. The first problem is the identification of lead and supporting roles. If all instruments of national power are to integrate into a single effort then all of them must play important roles. In the Clear and Hold phases, the DND-AFP and the Department of Interior and Local Government and Philippine National Police are the lead agencies. This places much emphasis on the military aspect of the problem. Secondly, the methodology is not dynamic. Adaptation by the enemy would render the methodology inappropriate in a matter of time. The rigid staging of the different phases do not

constitute a holistic approach, but a systematic one. Systematic approaches are best suitable for well-structured problems. Holistic approaches are more appropriate for interactively complex problems such as insurgencies. It is not enough to recognize the power of the interagency, there is a need for understanding and integrating them. The case study of the Basilan COIN campaign can best illustrate this.

### **The Basilan Case Study**

After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the GRP pledged its support to the U.S. in the Global War on Terror. In February 2002, U.S. deployed military advisers and trainers to the Philippines as part of OEF-P.<sup>43</sup> OEF-P adopted Gordon McCormick's<sup>44</sup> Diamond Model in supporting the AFP in its campaign against the ASG. The McCormick Diamond Model (see Figure 5, Appendix E) is a graphic representation of the strategies that counterinsurgents have to address any given insurgency. The strategies are ranked in priority order with Leg 1 (focus on people's need, security) being the highest. Execution of these strategies should be simultaneous and not by stages. This model represents a holistic view of COIN. Densley writes, "The model calls for the government to win the support of the local populace by providing their needs, interact with international actors, and conduct direct action to defeat the insurgents."<sup>45</sup>

The initial application of the model in Basilan was a success.<sup>46</sup> With assistance coming from the U.S., the AFP focused its efforts not only on the security aspect of the problem but also on the social aspect through the conduct of humanitarian assistance and civic action programs.<sup>47</sup> The campaign eventually stopped terroristic activities in Basilan and weeded out the ASG from the province. As Pena indicated in his study:

The most positive aspect of this local counterinsurgency campaign was the collaboration among the GRP agencies, particularly the DND, AFP, the Department of Local Government, Philippines National Police, and the local government of Basilan along with the assistance of the U.S. Government,

particularly USPACOM and the U.S. Agency for Internal Development (USAID), as well as different NGOs. This holistic approach to counterinsurgency created an environment of peace and development on the island of Basilan.<sup>48</sup>

On 4 June 2006, newly assumed U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney visited Basilan to turn over a newly constructed bridge to local officials. The project, which USAID funded, cost \$450,000.00. For 2006, USAID allocated \$220 million for development projects in the Philippines, \$40 million of which was for Mindanao alone.<sup>49</sup> It was during this time that the Basilan Model for COIN was being reported a success. On 10 July 2007, The MILF ambushed a convoy of Marines conducting rescue operations for kidnapped Italian priest Fr. Giancarlo Bossi leaving 23 Marines killed, 10 of them beheaded. It was one of the most ruthless killings of Marines in years. Thus began the deterioration of the security situation in the province with the ASG returning to the province and joining ranks with the MILF. The latest of these were the killing of another 23 Marines on 13 August 2009 and the attack on the provincial jail on 13 December 2009 by the MILF and ASG. Thirty-one inmates, some of them members of the ASG and MILF members with pending cases escaped during the attack.

Daniel Lucero identifies ethnic hatred and religious animosity as the root causes of the problem in Basilan.<sup>50</sup> He further identified patronage politics and poor governance to be secondary factors in permeating the problem in Basilan. He argues that education, ethnic and religious tolerance and good governance are the key areas to consider in solving the problem.<sup>51</sup>

In conclusion, he writes:

The peace and security problem in Basilan remains unresolved due to the application of shortsighted solutions. There is no short-term solution to the ethnic and religious problem in Basilan. What the government can do best is to deprive the rebel groups of new recruits. This can only be done through proper education and allowing the youth the opportunity to be productive citizens in the society.<sup>52</sup>

The current situation in Basilan does not indicate that the Basilan Model was a failure but that it was not successful because of its incorrect application and the ineffective measures of success. The AFP accomplished its mission of improving security conditions in the province and driving away the ASG. However, the tendency to proclaim a campaign a success if the AFP neutralizes or weeds out an armed group from an area even without addressing the underlying conditions of the insurgency. As early as 2004, David Maxwell wrote that:

The decision not to directly attack the alliance of the three terrorist groups and to concentrate solely on the ASG was a strategic error, however. Sustained operations on Basilan eventually drove the ASG off the island because of combat losses and the loss of bases and popular support, but the ASG "lived to fight another day" with help from the JI and MILF. The ASG is now reorganizing on the southern islands of Jolo and Tawi-Tawi, where U.S. forces have not been allowed to help the AFP.<sup>53</sup>

The AFP also failed to analyze the problem in its entirety. There was a semblance of interagency coordination but only at certain levels. The AFP and OEF-P planned the campaign without other agencies. The AFP's understanding of the ASG problem was from a military point of view. The AFP coordinated with other agencies to support its activities but it did not integrate valuable inputs that other agencies had in order to have a better understanding of the situation. This in effect led to the cosmetic solution, thereby failing to address the root causes of the problem in Basilan.

The lack of understanding and application of a cosmetic solution points back to the need for a dynamic campaign design, which calls for feedback and redesign whenever needed. The absence of national government agencies and other stakeholders in the designing of the campaign may have led to the incorrect assumptions. The absence of feedback and learning from the Basilan Model led the AFP to pursue the same approach, expecting that it would have the same effects as it initially had. As Densley noted:

Although the Basilan Model proved successful on Basilan Island, planners should realize its limitations, particularly in measuring its effectiveness in changing attitudes and behaviors and addressing causes rather than symptoms. Furthermore, it is important to realize that by addressing the people as the center of gravity and conducting activities to legitimize the Philippine Government in their eyes, there are still insurgents committed to violence and adhering to an ideology of terror.<sup>54</sup>

Even before the deterioration of the situation in Basilan, Pena pointed out that unfulfilled promises, bureaucratic deficiencies, and lack of collaboration resulted in the failure of previous COIN campaigns:

The experience and lessons learned from *Lambat-Bitag*<sup>55</sup> about government bureaucratic inefficiency and lack of appreciation by more civilian agencies must not be repeated in the current NISP. The NISP can be effective only if the administrators and implementors have the willingness to go beyond their “class and time.”<sup>56</sup>

The lack of appreciation by government agencies of their roles is mainly because the Philippines view insurgencies as military problems. Despite claiming to be a holistic approach, the NISP tends to gravitate to a military solution. It is then necessary to take the appropriate steps to correct these deficiencies.

### **Proposed GRP COIN Doctrine**

The Philippine Defense Review (PDR) in 2003 “provides the framework for introducing a comprehensive, institutional, structural and systemic reform package at the strategic level for the defense and military establishment.”<sup>57</sup> There are ten key reform areas of the PDR, one of which is to increase the capability of the AFP to conduct Civil Military Operations. The purpose of the focus on CMO is

To diminish the underlying socio-economic conditions and spur development in the countryside, the DND and AFP shall support efforts of the government that will facilitate the entry of economic enterprises in conflict areas. The DND and AFP will encourage government departments and agencies to identify and intensify particular programs and action plans that support the counter-insurgency campaign funded under their corresponding budgets. The DND will also support

the enhancement of convergence of government efforts at addressing the root causes of the insurgency.”<sup>58</sup>

Another key reform is improving operational and training capacity.<sup>59</sup> The need for reform in this area is to address the backlog in training and doctrine development of the AFP. These reforms are valuable to the conduct of COIN, for if pursued correctly, they would bridge the training and doctrinal gap of the AFP. It would also institutionalize interagency integration in the conduct of a holistic approach to COIN. The PMC should take advantage of the opportunities that the PDR provide especially so that the special attention is on CMO, training and doctrine development.

In order for the PMC to have a viable COIN Concept, there must be a complete paradigm shift in its understanding of COIN. Commanders and officers grasp only the military aspect. Training that Marines receive does not tie up with what COIN strategy from the national level asks them to do. There is a need for the PMC to develop a COIN Doctrine that would guide commanders, officers and Marines in the performance of COIN. The pursuit of a COIN doctrine could be coordinated with the Philippine Army (PA) so that there will be only one doctrine for the PMC and the PA. This would not only mean uniformity but would also facilitate interoperability and smooth turnover of responsibility between PMC and PA units whenever necessary. Programs for COIN training would bridge the gap now experienced by Marines in the field. Through the Department of National Defense, Headquarters PMC should recommend improvements to the NISP. PMC should coordinate with the different national government agencies tasked by the NISP for COIN. PMC should then enter into memorandum of agreements to ensure interagency support to units engaged in COIN. PMC should engage government agencies to provide mechanisms for integration, coordination and feedback.

In order for the PMC to have a viable COIN campaign, the foremost consideration would be the understanding that insurgency is an interactively complex undertaking. It is important to understand that not all insurgencies are the same. Proper application of a holistic COIN Concept will appropriately address insurgencies. Due to the geographic and ethnic nature of the Philippines, fighting the same insurgency group may vary from province to province. It is with this understanding that the new doctrine should incorporate the following:

#### 1) Campaign Design

Commanders should understand how to design a campaign using the different models provided in FM 3-24. Framing the problem correctly would facilitate the identification of the appropriate courses of action. The basics of System Theory must be included in the doctrine for it is necessary to change the way officers think. Systems Thinking provides for innovation and creativity that allows commanders to respond appropriately to insurgent adaptation. More importantly, it recognizes the importance of collaboration with all stakeholders in COIN. The U.S. Army draft FM 5-0 The Operations Process has an entire chapter devoted to campaign design.

#### 2) Interagency Integration

Integration means that GRP should provide mechanisms whereby agencies work under a single framework, an example of these would be the U.S. Civil Operations and Rural Development Support in Vietnam and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan. For the system to work, training and capacity building among the agencies concerned must precede deployment. At the very onset, it is necessary that other government agencies are included in the framing of the problem. Bard E. O'Neill provides an excellent framework for analysis in his book *Insurgency and Terrorism: from*



*Revolution to Apocalypse.* The expertise of different agencies would ensure a better understanding of the situation. This would avoid coming up with purely military responses. Giving the people false expectations may result in making the problem worse.

Some of the agencies that PMC should have closer collaboration with are the:

- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Public Works and Highways
- Department of Interior and Local Government
- Department of Agrarian Reform
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Justice
- National Economic Development Authority
- Cooperative Development Authority
- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
- Philippine National Police
- National Intelligence Coordinating Agency
- National Bureau of Investigation

### 3) Important aspects for Interagency Collaboration

Despite the successful conduct of military operations by the Marines, the root causes of insurgency remain in the locality. Marines cannot stay in one locality for a long period. If the Marines leave without establishing confidence of the people in the government, insurgency may recur. Restoring confidence in the government entails that LGUs are prepared to exercise good governance over their constituents and that the national government supports the LGUs in providing basic services to the people. Thus, interagency collaboration must include but is not limited to the following:

- Delivery Basic Services
- Education
- Livelihood
- Law Enforcement
- Criminal Justice System
- Re-integration of Rebel Returnees
- Land Reform
- Cultural Understanding

Interfaith Dialogue  
Strategic Communication  
Intelligence

International Organizations, Non-government Organizations, and other agencies of several concerned countries such as the USAID, Australian Government Overseas Aid Program, and Japanese Official Development Assistance, provide a large variety of expertise and funds to support development projects that could complement GRP COIN efforts.

#### 4) Human Terrain Mapping

The numerous ethnic groups in the Philippines make it necessary to understand the human terrain in each operating environment in order to apply the appropriate methods of approach. It is then necessary to have a standard criterion for describing the human terrain. According to O'Neill it is important to have a careful and unbiased assessment of the following:

Demography  
Social Structure and Values  
Economic Trends  
Political Culture  
Performance of the Political System<sup>60</sup>

#### 5) Lessons Learned

It would be useful to include successful practices as well as unsuccessful practices. This would provide Marines at the tactical level the necessary tools in the conduct of COIN. Analysis of the Anti-*Huk* Campaign and the Basilan model should be included. In the absence of a doctrine, the PMC could tentatively use FM 3-24, although some of the contents are not applicable to the Philippines. A good exercise would be to

study how the ideas in the manual correspond to the success of the AFP campaign against the *Huks* and the success and failure of the Basilan Model.

## **Conclusion**

The resurgence of the ASG in Basilan, the failure of the peace talks with the MILF, the breakaway of the RMNLF from the peace accord, and the resiliency of the CPP/NPA demonstrates the inadequacy of the military in dealing with insurgencies. The complexity of the 21<sup>st</sup> century security environment makes COIN even harder. It is evident that the AFP cannot conduct successful COIN on its own. The wide array of expertise other agencies provide are most of the time left untapped because interagency coordination is at most only at the local level. Tactical victories against the armed insurgents are more evident than strategic victories against the insurgency. Only holistic approaches can solve insurgencies. The NISP provide the framework for interagency cooperation and collaboration. It is time for the PMC to lead in instituting a paradigm shift, which would not only be beneficial to the Corps but also more importantly would be in the best interest of the Filipino people. The PMC should act immediately and implement the NISP by integrating the interagency in Philippine COIN.

## Appendix A

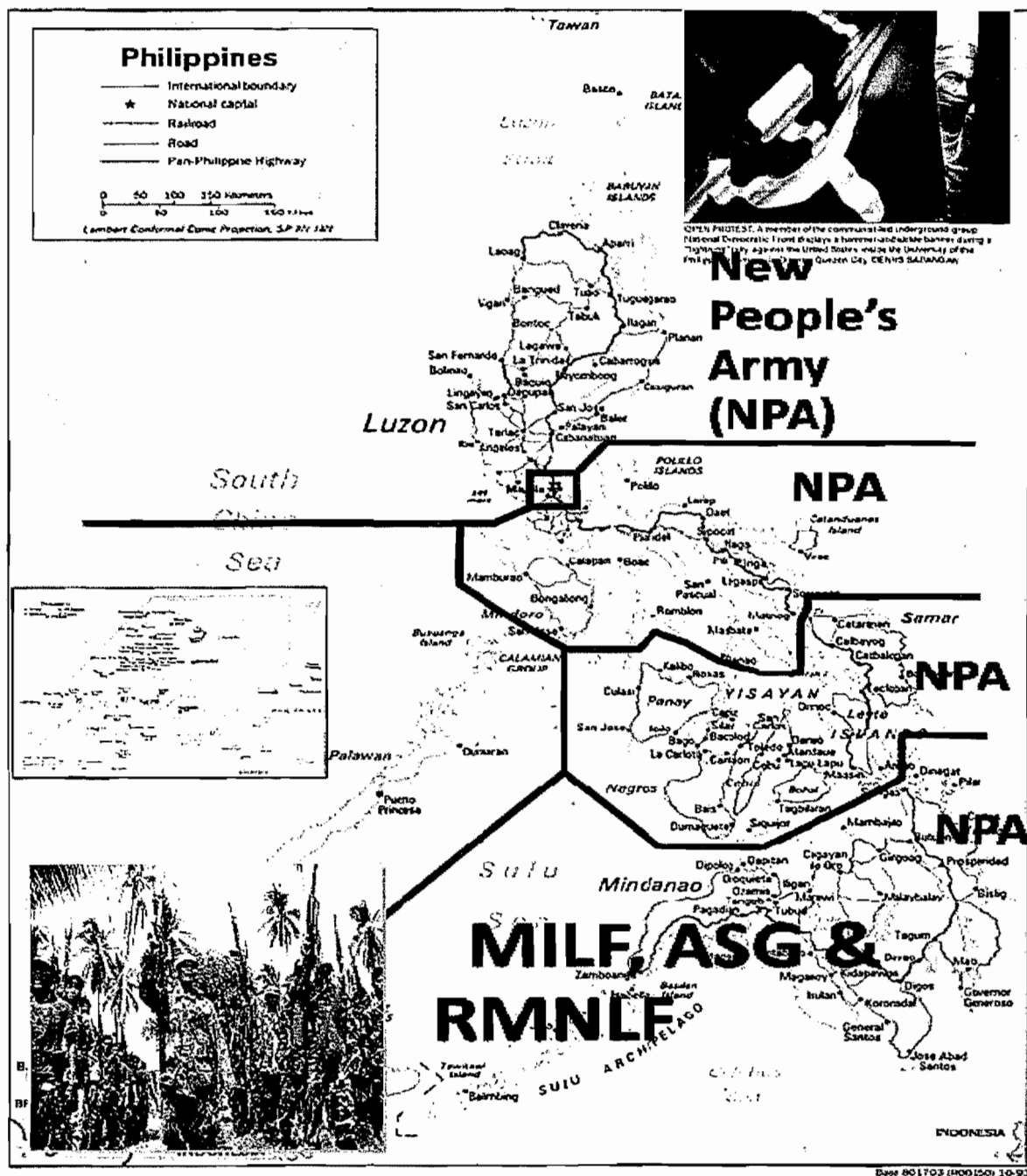
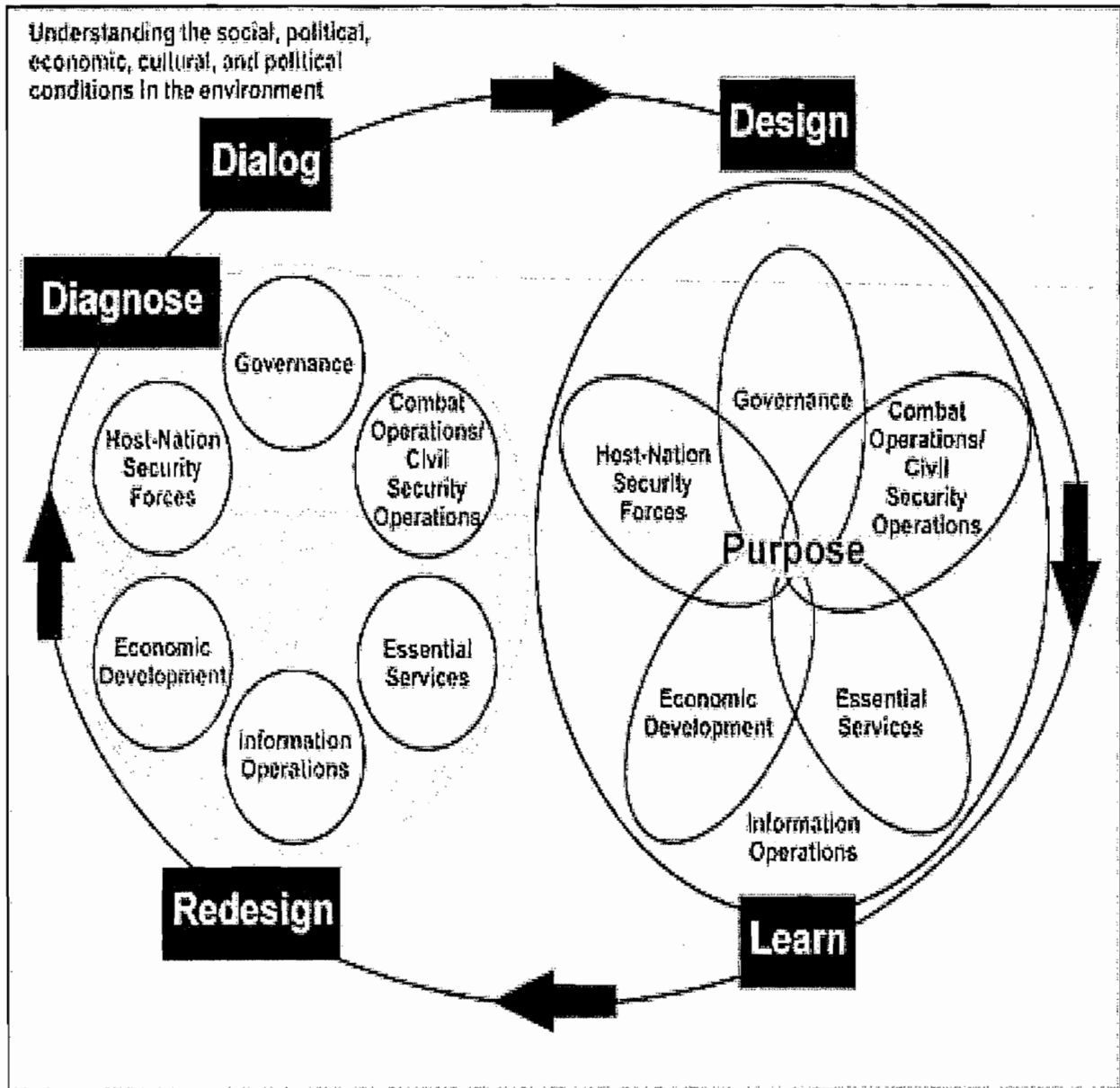


Figure 1 Threat Map of the Philippines

(Source: Philippines Country Brief 2009)

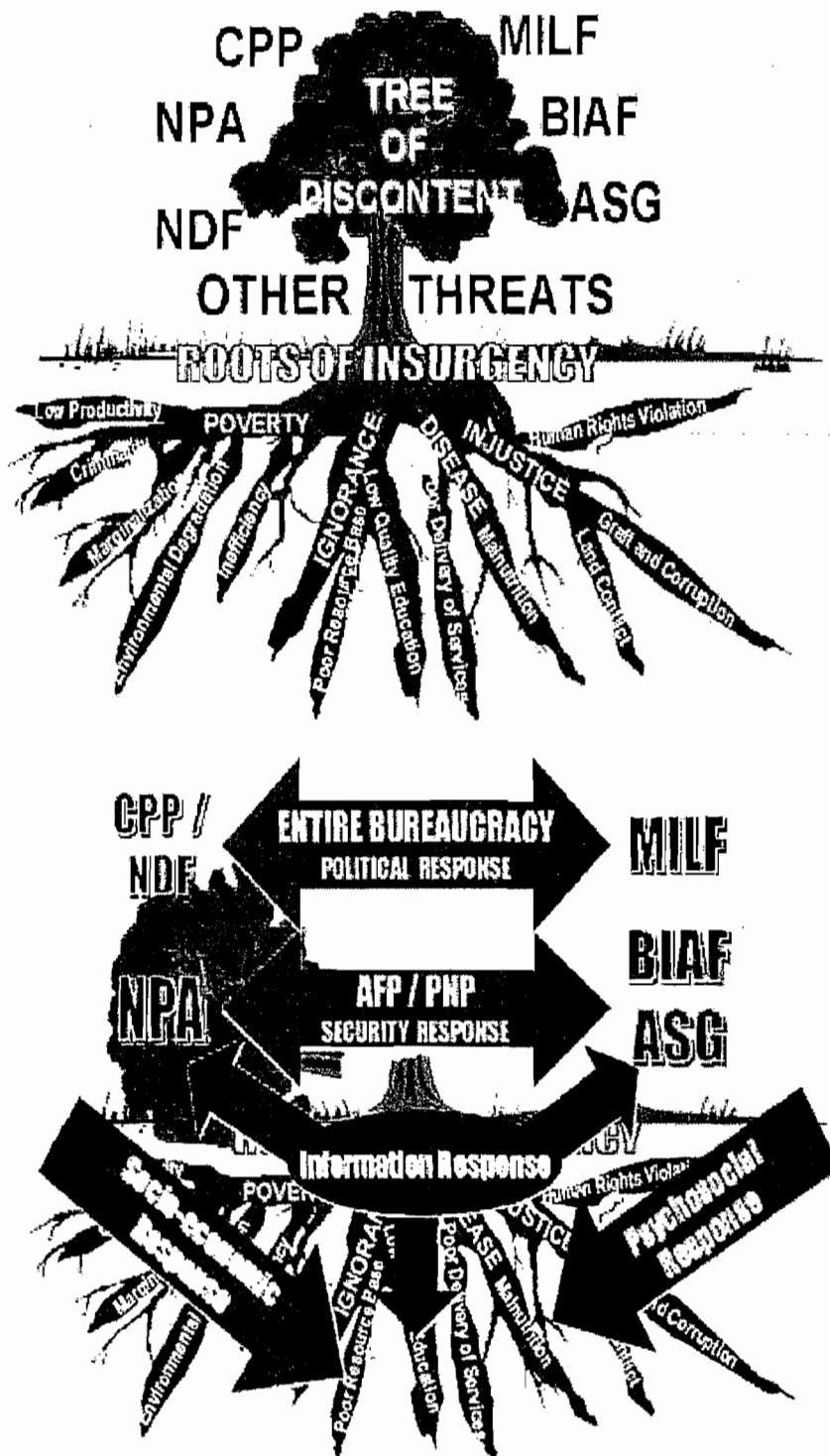
## Appendix B



**FIGURE 2 Iterative Counterinsurgency Campaign Design**

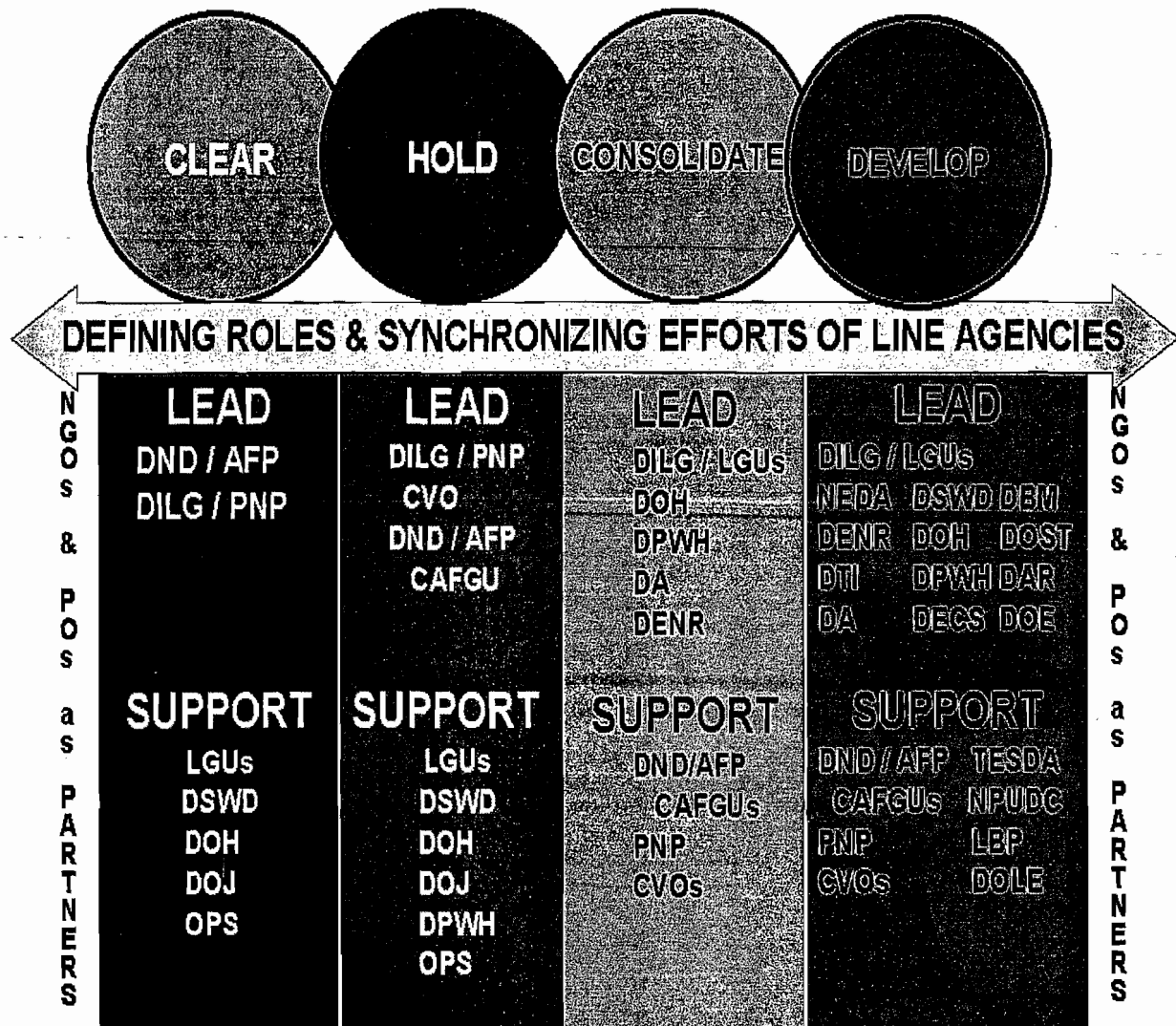
(Source: FM 3-24)

## Appendix C



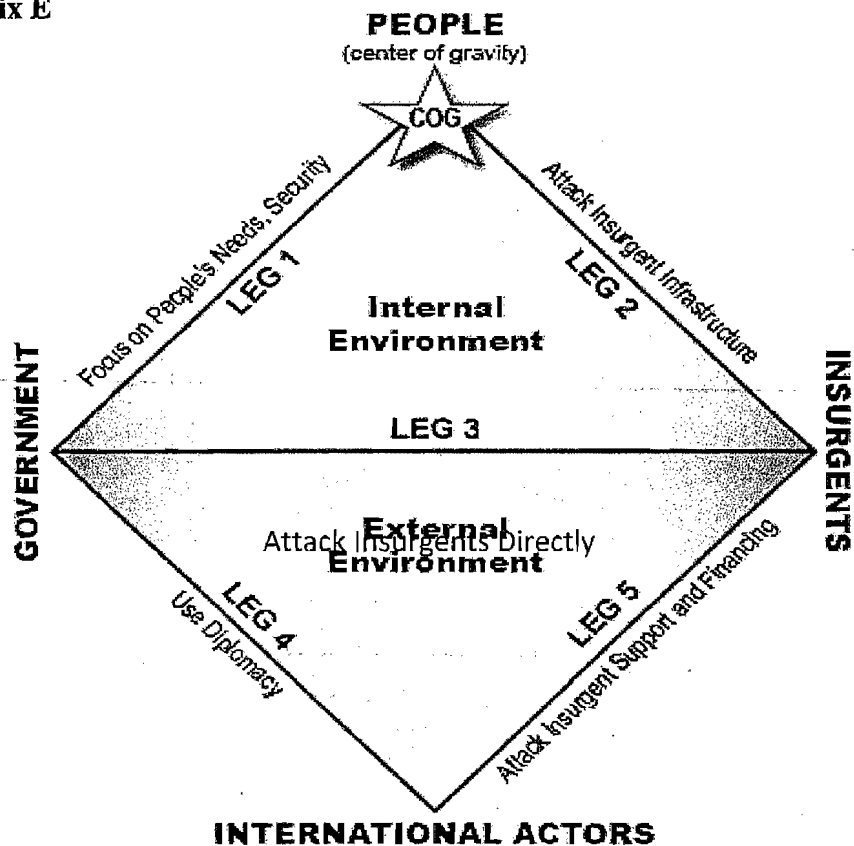
**Figure 3 Representation of the Philippine Insurgency and the GRP Response**  
(Source: NISP)

## Appendix D



**Figure 4 Synchronizing the Agencies' Efforts**  
(Source: NISP)

## Appendix E



### **Principles of the Diamond Model**

- Consider popular support the center of gravity
- Enhance government legitimacy and control
- Focus on people's needs and security
- Target insurgent safe havens, infrastructure, and support
- Share intelligence (esp. HUMINT)
- Develop indigenous security forces

**Fig 5. McCormick's Diamond Basilan Model**

Source: "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and the Indirect Approach."  
*Military Review* vol.86 no.6 (2006)



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## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> *Bantay Laya* means Guarding Freedom.
- <sup>2</sup> General Headquarters, Armed Forces of the Philippines, *AFP ISO Plan series 2007 (Bantay Laya II)* (Quezon City: GHQ, AFP, 01 December 2006).
- <sup>3</sup> *AFP ISO Plan series 2007 (Bantay Laya II)*.
- <sup>4</sup> Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines, *Executive Order 21 National Internal Security Plan series 2001*.
- <sup>5</sup> The HUKBALAHAP (*Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon* or in English Nationalist Army against the Japanese)
- <sup>6</sup> Lawrence M. Greenberg, *The HUKBALAHAP Rebellion: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines 1946-1955* (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History 1995), 41.
- <sup>7</sup> Mark Moyar, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq* (New Haven and London: The Yale Library of Military History, 2009), 107.
- <sup>8</sup> Richard D. Newton and others, *Contemporary Security Challenges: Irregular Warfare and Indirect Approaches* (Hulburt Field, Florida: The Joint Special Operations University Press, 2009), 7.
- <sup>9</sup> Greenberg, 112-142.
- <sup>10</sup> The Philippine Marines became the Philippine Marine Corps in 1995. "Philippine Marine Corps History," <http://www.scribd.com/doc/531065/Philippine-Marine-Corps-History>. (accessed 05 January 2010).
- <sup>11</sup> "Philippine Marine Corps History," <http://www.scribd.com/doc/531065/Philippine-Marine-Corps-History>. (accessed 05 January 2010).
- <sup>12</sup> Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines, *Final Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the MNLF*, 02 September 1996.
- <sup>13</sup> The group is known as the Rogue MNLF (RMNLF) and continue to be a threat to security to the province of Sulu but is not considered a threat to national security.
- <sup>14</sup> The Mindanao Examiner "New US Ambassador to Manila Braves Zamboanga, Basilan to Unveil More Humanitarian Projects for Mindanao," 28 March 2008. <http://zamboangajournal.blogspot.com/2006/04/new-us-ambassador-to-manila-kenny.html>. (accessed 12 January 2010)
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- <sup>20</sup> Eugenio V. Hernandez, "Assessing the Parameters for determining Mission Accomplishment of the Philippine Marine Corps in Internal Security Operations", Master's Thesis, Command and Staff College, 2009, 9.
- <sup>21</sup> David C. Gompert and John Gordon IV. *War by Other Means*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2008), xxxix. Hearts-and-minds by sharing public services generously, may prove that the government cares and thus earn it wide popular support. However, it will make the government more able and worthy. David C
- <sup>22</sup> David Kilcullen. "Counterinsurgency Redux," *Small Wars Journal*, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kilcullen1.pdf>, (accessed 07 January 2010).

<sup>23</sup> David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare Theory and Practice* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2006), 46.

<sup>24</sup> Galula, 43. Galula describes a cold revolutionary war as the period when the insurgent's activity remains on the whole legal and non-violent.

<sup>25</sup> Galula, 44-47.

<sup>26</sup> Galula, 43. Galula describes a hot revolutionary war as the period when the insurgent's activity becomes openly illegal and violent.

<sup>27</sup> Galula, 52-55.

<sup>28</sup> Allison Al-Baddawy and John Mackinlay, *Rethinking Counterinsurgency* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2008), ix.

<sup>29</sup> David Kilcullen. "Counterinsurgency Redux", *Small Wars Journal*, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/kilcullen1.pdf>, (accessed 07 January 2010).

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Department of the Army Headquarters, and Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency, FM 2-24 or MCWP 3-33.5* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, December 2006), Foreword.

<sup>31</sup> *Counterinsurgency*, Foreword.

<sup>32</sup> *Counterinsurgency*, 4-2.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of the Army Headquarters, *The Operations Process, FM 5-0 (draft)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 5 October 2009), 3-8.

<sup>34</sup> *Counterinsurgency*, 4-3.

<sup>35</sup> Steven G. Lurhsen, "Understanding Systems Theory for U.S. Marines," Master's Thesis, Command and Staff College, 2007, 1.

<sup>36</sup> J.R.T. Wood. "Countering the *Chimurenga*: The Rhodesian Counterinsurgency Campaign, 1962-1980," in Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, eds., *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* (Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2008), 185.

<sup>37</sup> *The Operations Process*, 3-2.

<sup>38</sup> Tom Christensen and Per Laegreid, "The Whole of Government Approach to Public Sector Reform," Public Administration Review, November/December 2007, 1060. Tom Christensen is a Professor University of Oslo, Norway and is also an adjunct senior researcher at the Rokkan Centre, University of Bergen, in the Department of Political Science. He specializes in Organizational Design in the Public Administration, especially the development of a knowledge basis for institutional policy and politics in general and comparative civil service reform. Per Laegreid is a Professor at the Department of Administration and Organization Theory and senior researcher at Stein Rokkan Centre for Social Studies, University of Bergen, Norway. He specializes in Research on Administrative reform, institutional change, organization theory, administrative policy, comparative administration, public sector reform. *University of Oslo*, <http://www.statsvitenskap.uio.no/ansatte/presentation/person/stvtcl-eng.xml>, and *POLIS*, [http://www.polis.no/Autonomy/Per\\_Lagereid.html](http://www.polis.no/Autonomy/Per_Lagereid.html) (accessed 23 March 2010)

<sup>39</sup> State Department and Department of Defense, U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, January 2009), Preface.

<sup>40</sup> *National Internal Security Plan (NISP) series 2001*.

<sup>41</sup> *National Internal Security Plan (NISP) series 2001*

<sup>42</sup> *National Internal Security Plan (NISP) series 2001*

<sup>43</sup> David S. Maxwell. "Operation Enduring Freedom- Philippines: What Sun Tzu Would Say?" *US Army Professional Writing Collection*, May-June 2004.

[http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume2/june\\_2004/6\\_04\\_3.html](http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume2/june_2004/6_04_3.html), (accessed 12 January 2010)

<sup>44</sup> Dr. Gordon H. McCormick is a Professor and Chair, Department of Defense Analysis Graduate School of Operational and Information Sciences at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. [http://research.nps.navy.mil/cgi-bin/vita.cgi?p=display\\_vita&id=1023567721](http://research.nps.navy.mil/cgi-bin/vita.cgi?p=display_vita&id=1023567721) (accessed 23 March 2010)

<sup>45</sup> Jason A. Densley, "The Basilan Model: A Case Study in Counterinsurgency Operations," (Master's Thesis, Air Command and Staff College, Air University, 2008), 9.

<sup>46</sup> The success of the model made it known as the "Basilan Model". Colonel Gregory Wilson, U.S. Army, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-PHILIPPINES and The Indirect Approach," *Military Review*, November-December 2006, [http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume5/january\\_2007/1\\_07\\_1.html](http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume5/january_2007/1_07_1.html), (accessed 12 January 2010)

<sup>47</sup> Leonardo I. Pena, "Finding the Missing Link to a Successful Philippine Counterinsurgency Strategy", Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2007, 48-49. LtCol. Leonardo Pena PA is a Special Forces officer in the Philippine Army and is a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class 1991.

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<sup>48</sup> Pena, 48.

<sup>49</sup> "New US Ambassador," <http://zamboangajournal.blogspot.com/2006/04/new-us-ambassador-to-manila-kenny.html>. (accessed 12 January 2010)

<sup>50</sup> Daniel Lucero. "Terrorism and Political Violence in Basilan: A Case of Ethnic Hatred," *Philippine Institute for Political Violence and Terrorism*, Research Paper Series, October 2008. 5. Colonel Daniel A. Lucero is the Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil-Military Operations, G7, Philippine Army. He received his Master of Arts degree in International Relations from the Australian National University. In 2001, he led the 18th Infantry Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, Philippine Army, then deployed in Basilan province to its first ever Philippine Army Streamer Award. He is a member of Philippine Military Academy Class '83

<sup>51</sup> Lucero, 5.

<sup>52</sup> Lucero, 4-5.

<sup>53</sup> David S. Maxwell, "Operation Enduring Freedom- Philippines: What Sun Tzu Would Say?" *US Army Professional Writing Collection*, May-June 2004. [http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume2/june\\_2004/6\\_04\\_3.html](http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume2/june_2004/6_04_3.html), (accessed 12 January 2010). Colonel David Maxwell USA served in various command and staff positions in the Continental United States, Korea, Japan, Germany, and the Philippines, where he was the Commander of the initial battalion that deployed during Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines in Basilan and later Commander of Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines during OPLAN ULTIMATUM.

<sup>54</sup> Densley, 28.

<sup>55</sup> *Lambat-Bitag* (means Fishnet Trap) was the strategy of the Aquino administration against the CPP/NPA. It was a strategy of gradual constriction of communist areas by a combination of military pressure and social reform. Ian Frederick William Beckett. *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies: Guerillas and their Opponents since 1750* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 106.

<sup>56</sup> Pena was alluding to the class act of Magsaysay during the campaign against the Huks. Pena, 63

<sup>57</sup> Philippine Defense Reform [http://www.dnd.gov.ph/DNDWEBPAGE\\_files/html/pdrpage.htm](http://www.dnd.gov.ph/DNDWEBPAGE_files/html/pdrpage.htm). (accessed 05 January 2010).

<sup>58</sup> Philippine Defense Reform [http://www.dnd.gov.ph/DNDWEBPAGE\\_files/html/pdrpage.htm](http://www.dnd.gov.ph/DNDWEBPAGE_files/html/pdrpage.htm). (accessed 05 January 2010).

<sup>59</sup> Philippine Defense Reform [http://www.dnd.gov.ph/DNDWEBPAGE\\_files/html/pdrpage.htm](http://www.dnd.gov.ph/DNDWEBPAGE_files/html/pdrpage.htm). (accessed 05 January 2010).

<sup>60</sup> Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: from Revolution to Apocalypse*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005), 166.